ST. LUCIE RIVER INITIATIVE

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August 13, 2001

Mr. Henry Dean
Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Subject: **Support for Aquifer Storage and Recovery Projects, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan**

Dear Mr. Dean:

On behalf of the St. Lucie River Initiative, Inc, I am writing this letter to express our support for the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Projects associated with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

Our mission is to see the St. Lucie River restored to good health. We have a plan, the Indian River Lagoon Restoration Plan (IRLP), which is on schedule to be authorized in WRDA 2002, and which when implemented will result in our goal being achieved.

A critical assumption, perhaps better stated as a foundation assumption, within the IRLP is that Lake Okeechobee is managed much differently in the future than it is today. This future Lake management regime depends upon the storage projected within the overall CERP using ASR. If ASR is not implemented, the adverse effects on Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries will be very significant.

The failed ASR legislation from the 2001 Florida Legislative session resulted in much negative media coverage regarding the ASR technology. The fate of microorganisms in aquifers, the subject of the failed ASR bill, requires further study. We fully support those studies, and encourage more rapid evaluation to the extent possible. On the other hand, we agree that if ASR is determined, based on these studies, to be a threat to future water resources, it must be dismissed as a storage alternative.

The sooner we know the answer, the better. There does not appear to be another storage technology available that can provide multi-year storage to alleviate drought conditions, as experienced by Florida during the last year and a half. ASR technology is not subject to evapotranspiration or seepage losses and requires only an acre or two per ASR well system, and as such may provide cost-effective benefits beyond traditional storage technologies such as reservoirs

already proposed in CERP. However, if it is not going to work, more traditional storage and more extensive conservation measures must be designed and implemented as soon as possible within the overall Plan.

As presented at the August 2, 2001, Water Resource Advisory Commission meeting, implementation of the CERP ASR projects are proceeding in a slow, methodical manner to answer the many questions about applying this storage technology.

As a member of the Water Resource Advisory Commission to the South Florida Water Management District, we encourage you to continue your efforts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct the necessary data collection and scientific studies to truly evaluate the ASR technology for the benefit of Everglades Restoration as outlined in the CERP. At the same time, we recommend that the alternatives be ready to go if those studies do not prove the safety and cost-effectiveness of the ASR component.

Sincerely,

F.D. Bud Jordan
President